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ABSTRACT

This paper argues for radical perspectivism in education and provides an introduction to the goals of perspectivist education, the teaching methods, and the curriculum along with addressing moral education and the underlying assumptions of the theory. Radical perspectivism stresses that to really understand something, it must be considered from a variety of human and non-human perspectives and out of the diversity of perspectives arises an understanding of the universe as a whole. The five goals of radical perspectivist education are: (1) understanding the world from human and non-human perspectives; (2) seeing self as an integral part of the world; (3) representing the world through us; (4) visualizing the world's universal possibilities; and (5) thinking of concrete steps to stop destroying the world's universal possibilities. The teaching methods proposed for students to learn about the world in perspectivist education began with the use of the conventional curriculum and an awareness of the assumptions contained within it. The next step was to use role playing to learn about perspectives. In the third step, the students analyzed the role playing with various activities and the fourth step had students rewrite the curriculum with instructor assistance. The fifth and final step concluded with the students beginning to think of ways to expand the universal possibilities of the world and self. Objections to perspectivist education addressed the problems of animism, human-like intentions, and inanimate world-parts intentions. The last issue focused on moral education from a radical perspectivism. (CK)

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HUMANS IN THE WORLD:
INTRODUCTION TO THE EDUCATIONAL THEORY OF RADICAL PERSPECTIVISM

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Paper presented at the annual conference of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, November 14, 1992, Chicago, Illinois

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HUMANS IN THE WORLD:
INTRODUCTION TO THE EDUCATIONAL THEORY OF RADICAL PERSPECTIVISM[1]

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Introduction

Radical perspectivism extends the realm of human possibilities well beyond anything so far advocated by even the most radical humanism, post-structuralist communication, or critical analysis of the underlying social or psychoanalytic dynamics of human behavior. We define radical perspectivism, below, including its goals, teaching methods and curriculum. Suffice it to mention here that radical perspectivism identifies not only with this or that culture, reform effort, or epoch, but with the whole universe. Under the tenets of radical perspectivism, human beings are redefined to encompass the whole universe, while pedagogy becomes an exercise in representing it. This is accomplished primarily through role play, empathic understanding, and perspectivistic analysis. In perspectivist pedagogy, students learn to use their ability to think and imagine as the Other, while in the process they learn to expand their sense of self to include the world.

What is Radical Perspectivism?

Radical perspectivism is the idea that to really understand something, be it visible or invisible, past or present, abstract or concrete, it must be considered from a variety of human and non-human perspectives. It is "perspectivist," because its theories of truth, value, meaning, or being are based not on any single perspective, but collectively on a variety of even conflicting perspectives about the world. It is "radical," because it extends its search for perspectival diversity well beyond human perspectives, to those which humans can imagine other animate and inanimate parts of the world might have about the world. Radical perspectivism brings back to humans the harmony of the planets, as it forces them to live in harmony with non-human perspectives which at the beginning they may even "dislike." Out of this diversity of perspectives arises an understanding of the universe as a whole, and with it man's role as a "universal perspectivist."

The tenets of perspectivist theory have been used, assumed, or built upon for centuries by philosophers and others, but never as explicitly stated as they are here. The closest philosophers have come to acknowledging the significance of perspectivist theory <u>as a theory</u>, and not merely as a routine method of philosophical analysis, is when they attempt to state explicitly the underlying assumptions or first definitions in their system building, as have idealists ever since Plato; in analyzing the underlying assumptions of existing theories, as did Marxist and Freudian philosophers, and recently critical theorists and hermeneuticists[2]; in requiring that one empathize with the other to understand it, as did Wilhelm Dilthey and the phenomenologists; in postulating pantheism, or the existence of cosmic monads or universal wills, as did, respectively, Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Leibniz, and Friedrich Nietzsche[3]; or, finally, in postulating the existence of immortal or recurring souls, spirits, and dieties in the universe, as did ancient, Eastern, and African religions and theosophies, such as Zoroastrianism, Senegalese animism, Jainism, and Buddhism. In other words, philosophers have always used the perspectivist approach, thus implicitly

acknowledging at least its analytical utility, but never explicitly acknowledged it as a theory of truth in its own right.

Underlying radical perspectivism is the assumption that no one assumption about the world is more true than another, although all of them collectively are "true" about the world. This is so because the world is equally all of its parts, and therefore one can be no more partial toward any one of them in trying to understand the world, than the world is more one part than another. Similar to perspectivist drawing in art or architecture, so is philosophical perspectivism angular in its approach, spherical in its process, and unifying in its conclusions. By including the perspectives of other world-parts in our reinterpretations of the world, such as, other animals, plants, nature (mountains, planets), or even human-made artifacts, we include the world, and as a result our conclusions can be no less "worldly."

More than "multicultural," radical perspectivism requires an open mind not only toward other cultures, but also non-human perspectives. Less the colonizer, and more the reinterpreter, the perspectivist human lives in harmony with the universe simply to live. As a philosophy, radical perspectivism prepares humans for the cosmic age, where their view of themselves as reinterpreters is colored by their understanding of the universe. Their recently acquired technical skills, such as, the ability to travel away from planet earth, may allow them to "see" the world from remotely human perspectives, and therefore to really begin to see it. For example, seeing the "blue planet" from a perspective outside earth, they may come to realize how much lacking in perspective their treatment of the earth so far may have been. At the same time, there is the danger that they may become too scientific to really "see" the world, as they may fail to realize how much more world there is that can't be discovered through science.

Psychologically, the perspectivist's sense of self expands to include the universe as a whole. As possibly the last frontier in his intellectual odyssey, the radical perspectivist expands his horizons to include those world perspectives which in the modern western world have been either ridiculed or ignored, but which may bring him back home to himself. He may begin to see the significance of empathizing with the world, as have several non-western cultures (Native American, African, South American, or Asian). The further away he travels from himself, through what he can see through the microscope, telescope, or spacecraft window, the more he may find out about himself that he could have known even if he had never left the earth behind. Ironically, the more advanced he becomes technologically, the more he may come to identify with those world beliefs and rituals which presently are held in "primitive" societies that have none of his highly technical capacities.

As a method of questioning, radical perspectivism extends the socratic "torpedo shock" well beyond anything that humans may have experienced: it brings to surface those non-human perspectives that humans have always sensed are "true," but either took too seriously in the past, or not seriously enough, especially in the modern age, to allow the world to play them. Ironically, the same play element that they find ludicrous in non-human perspectives, is the attitude required of them to seriously" understand the world. Their "seriousness" under radical perspectivism is no more "serious," than is a child's absorption in his role-play, or for that matter, the adult audience identifying with the

characters in a drama.

Aware of their ability to tell lies, invent illusions with which to feel secure in a threatening world, or teach the young how to role-play, nevertheless humans relegate their ability to role-play to myth, religion, theater, or children's stories, but not also to their social or political life, or, for that matter, to education. Instead of using the world to build their institutions, write their laws, or shape the attitudes of their young, they feel they must use themselves as the standard by which to change the world, or even "conquer" it to survive. Modern humans have failed to realize that to understand the world, if not live to understand it, they must become a little more like a child, that is, playful, imaginative, and open-minded.

Radical perspectivism can cause our view of the world to change. In this, it is no different than any of the other philosophical systems with radically different world views. For example, regarding science, radical perspectivism requires that we supplement scientific technique with role-play, even if that means that we role-play the scientific method. In the process of role-playing the other, we allow other world-parts to re-enlist our imagination in reinterpreting them, or in re-educating ourselves or our young to "identify" with nature. Under the tenets of radical perspectivism, our views on morality, science, education, language, method, religion, or truth change drastically to enable us to perceive the world from universal perspectives. In the end, radical perspectivism brings us back into the universal fold without denying us our humanity, if not salvage it from the mire of self-centered assumptions about the world that threaten to destroy us. Ideologically, radical perspectivism is closely allied with environmentalism. Radical perspectivism helps humans to identify with the world as a whole, even if that means changing oneself to help other world parts survive. Thus the "perspectivist human" identifies his own survival with the world's. Ultimately, perspectivism helps humans develop those beliefs or attitudes that will help them live in a world which they must help to survive.

Logically, radical perspectivism may be arrived at independently of any prior social or political agenda by analyzing the nature of human thought, the development of human values, or the logic of human survival. The author does this in his book on radical perspectivism, in the chapter on "first assumptions," where he analyzes human thought, specifically, the assumptions necessary for anyone to be able to think, talk, or imagine anything. Even while examining radical perspectivism from the outside on the basis of non-perspectivist assumptions, we are led to the same conclusions about it as might a follower of radical perspectivism who examines it from the inside. In the book on radical perspectivism, the author begins with an analysis of assumptions that undergrid all human thought, and concludes with categories of "perspectival" assumption-types.

Radical perspectivism takes issue with Husserl's method of phenomenological research[4]. According to Husserl, to really see the world or understand it as-is, we should suspend our presuppositions before we even begin to observe it[5]. To a large extent, Husserl's approach is perspectivistic. For example, by asking the observer to bracket his presuppositions in his world observations, Husserl seems to acknowledge the existence of non-self-centered perspectives.

Nevertheless, Husserl failed to realize the extent to which humans can role-play the presupposition of the other, or, by contrast, their inability to think without presuppositions. Instead of asking humans to bracket their atomic presuppositions, under radical perspectivism we ask them to expand them to include other world-parts.

Radical perspectivism also takes issue with the text-centered interpretations of several hermeneuticists and post-structuralists, including Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Derrida[6]. By making text-like paradigms paramount, hermeneuticists may have "texted" the world out of sight. This is so because text is a particularly human-bound phenomenon, and one which is limited to certain text-bound cultures or social groups. As such, it is too textual to be the world's. To paraphrase Heidegger, a text interpretation of the world is circular: it assumes in human-like terms precisely those man-made assumptions which it is trying to understand.

In the pages that follow the author gives a brief introduction to the goals, teaching methods, and curriculum of radical perspectivism, including its hidden curriculum. He adds dialectical validity to the theory by raising two objections against its underlying assumptions, and subsequently making an effort to answer them[7]. Finally, he illustrates its applicability by discussing its significance for moral education.

Goals of Perspectivist Education

The five most important goals in radical perspectivist education are, first, to understand the world not only from a human perspective, but also from the diverse perspectives of other world-parts. Second, to begin to see ourselves as an integral part of the world which we are trying to understand. Third, to rediscover our ability to represent the world by allowing it to think through us, as in role play. Fourth, to visualize the world's universal possibilities, including the possibilities for survival of other world-parts. And fifth, to begin to think of concrete steps that humans can take to stop destroying the world's universal possibilities, if not help expand them, including those which help humans themselves survive[8].

Method of Perspectivist Education

Students follow five steps in their learning about the world: first, they learn about the world through the conventional curriculum, except they begin with an awareness that there is more "curriculum" than their conventional curriculum can provide. In fact, as an introduction to the perspectivist curriculum, they briefly review all five steps of their teaching methodology at the beginning of their educational experience, including briefly role-playing other world parts (other humans, animals, or inanimate parts). As a result, they become intellectually aware of the possible man-centerdness of their conventional curriculum, meaning, the man-centered-in-the-present interperations of the world offered by traditional subjects. To supplement their understanding of the world, or, more correctly, to really begin to understand, they embark on the next four steps in their methodology. As a next (second) step, they begin to learn about the world from the world's perspective, even apart from all they may have learned so far about how the world must be like to be true. As a first substep, they

begin by gradually rediscovering the assumptions that they can imagine other world-parts may have about the world. Next (=second substep), they make an effort to divide assumptions according to the degree to which they are self-centered or atomic, cross-cultural, or universal[9]. Finally, as a third sub-step, they begin to role-play other world parts, including other humans, animals, or other animate or inanimate parts, not unlike young children frequently do in their make-believe games. At this stage, students learn about universal possibilities by gradually universalizing their understanding of the world. Instead of pre-defining the universe in man-centered ways, they learn how to redefine their understanding of the world through role-play. Is pretending to be the other possible? That it is, is shown from the fact that we have always imagined what other animals, plants, or even inanimate parts of nature (mountains, the sun) might have said or done were they capable of thinking, imagining, or speaking to us. Witness, for example, the colorful stories in eastern mythologies, Aristophanes' Frogs, or children's literature today. When doing so, we often make an effort to represent other world parts as they might have reinterpreted themselves, us, or the world, presumably on the basis of their own first assumptions about the world. Theirs may be non-man-bound "reinterpretations" of the world, in the sense that they may be interpreted to have a point of view which as humans we rarely use in our everyday lives. For example, an elephant who is in danger of extinction because of the settlement of forests by humans may have a very different view of the world than do the humans that are settling in the forest. However culture or time inclusive our first assumptions may become, they remain man-bound if they exclude other animate or inanimate parts of the world, and therefore too limited to allow us to see the world as a reinterpretable whole. If students exclude from their reinterpretations those of the non-human world, they may be excluding precisely the world which they have set out to understand. It is in this sense that people who write children's or animal stories, or have visualized in myth or religion how the world might be from non-human perspectives, may have more keys to understanding it, than scientists who analyze it "objectively." At the next (third) stage of their understanding, students begin to analyze their role-play experience through class discussions, written assignments, or even further role-play. Having gone through the experience of being like-the-other, they can empathize better with it, than if they were to study it strictly intellectually, or even inactively in their imagination. Now they can truly compare their own understanding of the world, with the understanding which they remember they had when they were the other. They can begin to compare what they learned about the world of the conventional curriculum, with the world they learned about in their role play. This leads naturally to the next stage in their education, which is "worlding" the curriculum, meaning, imbuing it with world perspectives which so far man may have largely ignored (except in his role-play). During the fourth stage, students together with their instructor begin to re-write the curriculum to represent the world. In other words, to "world their understanding," meaning, imbue it with the world which they are trying to understand (and not merely to understand the world, meaning from only human or scientific perspectives), they use those teaching methods which they can imagine other world-parts might have liked them to use. At this stage, they not only describe orally or in writing methods of role-playing the world, itself useful as a preliminary stage to learning about other world perspectives, but also restructure their learning environment to be more world-like, especially more like the world that they would like to role play. For example, they may study birds by "birding" their learning, that is,

by flying like birds, which in turn may require that they include bird-flying experiences that may be found outside the conventional classroom, such as, sky gliding; or, lacking the resources, have at least some kind of bird-like flying device near their school that will allow them to simulate it, such as, a playground. In fact, the more students world their curriculum, the more they may come to realize that the only reason they cannot learn about it in school may be not because it is not available, but because their school may be too limited to human assumptions about learning to include them. Ultimately, the nature of schooling itself may be redefined to include all of nature, and thus to extend its "course offerings" well beyond the conventional walls of a traditional school. Finally at the fifth or last stage of their learning, which may be seen as the ethical stage, they begin to think of ways to help the world become more "worldly," that is, expand its universal possibilities, including their own. By "universal possibilities" here is meant the possibilities for different world-categories to become, or their individual members to evolve. By "evolution" here is meant re-adjustment, exploration, and re-emergence, or, more broadly, play, than strictly straighforward mutation. Thus the expansion of world possibilities doesn't mean that no world part may change or "disappear," since its possibilities as a future-world-part may result in a world-part-descendant that is "different" from its current existence; nor does it mean that no world part may overtake another, two world parts unite into a new synthesis, or a world part come naturally to the end of its possibilities, but that as a result of these combinatory or self-imposed actions the possibilities of each world part, or, to paraphrase from Aristotle, its potential-in-the-present as a becoming-world-part, are not hastily eliminated through mindless exploitation of nature. Witness the variety of "lifestyles" which modern biology has shown is possible among life forms on earth, from symbiosis to parasitism, each of which may be seen morally as maintaining, minimizing, or maximizing the future possibilities of their own or other world parts, and therefore, on the basis of a reciprocal view of morality, as more or less universally desirable[10]. Unlike other philosophies that sway man away from action, perspectivist education moves him to action that will benefit not only humans-in-the-present, but other world parts whose possibilities for survival are tied to the world's.

Perspectivist Curriculum

A perspectivist curriculum prepares students to analyze, imagine, apply, or role-play the world from a variety of world-prespectives. We refer to this type of world curriculum as "universal." Students study other cultures, or other animate or inanimate parts of the world, including world-parts even beyond the planet earth. A universal curriculum might include cross-cultural studies, the study of cultures across time, diverse "philosophies," the lifestyles of other animals (as in ethology), or the biological and non-biological aspects of other world-parts. A universal curriculum also includes the study of unreal worlds, such as, fictional worlds that have already been written about, and those which students can write about, discuss, imagine, or role-play from scratch. The method of study becomes part of the curriculum, that is, discussed or analyzed, as are also the moral aspects of man's place in the universe[11]. Finally, as we discuss under the section "Hidden Curriculum," below, the teaching method of radical perspectivist education is itself another type of curriculum. Seen from the perspective of method-as-another-type-of-curriculum, a perspectivist curriculum requires that we study not only the world-as-subject, but also the world-as-

method.

The Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum is the message conveyed to our students not through what we say in the classroom, but through what we do, or "how" we say it. For example, the very fact that we use a classroom conveys something regarding how we think students should be learning, as contrasted to learning any which way they would like. Thus as a result of their classroom learning, students may come to sanction only that type of learning that is classroom-derived, associate learning with classroom experiences, or seek to form classrooms when trying to learn or teach something. Although perhaps unable to articulate clearly the underlying assumptions of classroom-centered learning, in the end they may have learned at least as much from the way they learned, including the physical architecture or anthropology of their educational environment, as from their professed or "open" curriculum. But even within the classroom, the method used to teach a subject may have a more lasting effect on the students' belief system, than the ideas expressed in class or during lecture. For example, a junior high school teacher may be teaching about democracy, but use dictatorial teaching methods. As a result, his students may come to learn more about dictatorship through his teaching example, although they may not know what to call it at the time, than about democracy through what they listen to in class[12]. The same reversal may be applied to the curriculum. This is so because the curriculum itself may be seen as another method, that is, the method of organizing or conveying knowledge in curriculum-like form. Such curriculum may be seen as the "hidden method" in education. Finally, on a more abstract level, there is the curriculum of our first assumptions about our choice of method. Although less apparent than the open curriculum which students see or experience, it may become apparent by asking the teacher himself not only what method he or she is using, but more importantly, <u>why</u>. Other ways of unearthing hidden methodological assumptions, which in turn may serve as the basis for redesigning teaching methodologies from different perspectives, may include role-playing the method; asking students what they think they may have learned as a result of being taught by this rather than that method; or analyzing the results, reinterpretations, or criticisms which such method may have had in other classes, cross-culturally, or in alternative educational environments. For example, competitive teaching methods may help improve student academic achievement more in western middle class environments, than in cultures that prize sharing or cooperation[13].

<u>Objections to Perspectivist Education</u>

In the book on radical perspectivism, the author answers several objections to perspectivist theory in addition to those which he has raised here[14]. In this section he limits himself only to two, the objection regarding animism, and the objection regarding human-like intentions.

A. The Problem of Animism

It may be objected that radical perspectivism is another form of animism, that is, the idea that all animate and inanimate parts in the world have human-like characteristics. This is so because in our selection of universal first assumptions we expect non-human parts of the world to have "assumptions," which

presumably only human beings can have. Furthermore, it might be objected that we have not only ascribed human-like characteristics to the world, but also confused man's interpretation of the world with the world's own interpretation of itself. We have three responses to this objection. First, we never really ascribed intentions or assumptions to the world, apart from how human beings re-interpret the world, for example in their role-play. In fact, it is precisely because historically humans have often ascribed human-like characteristics on the world, that we propose that we re-interpret the world from non-human "perspectives." For example, humans frequently saw certain animals as having human-like characteristics, when in fact seen from the perspective of these animals they may be no more "human" than the atomic first assumptions which humans project on them. For example, a snake may be no more "evil," or even the representative of evil, than man's theological beliefs about evil. Likewise with other animals which humans have either lionized, satanized, domesticated, or anthropomorphized. Second, we are as much part of the world as anything else, as is shown from the fact that we can't live without the world (for example, without the food that the world provides, the air, etc.). Consequently, the world-as-something-that-includes-us can think about itself through us, as world-man. Humans can help fulfill the world's possibilities, as it is through humans that the world as world-man can express them to itself. In this pairing of reflexive humans and reinterpretable world, humans are no more "human" than their mirror view of themselves-in-the-world. Third, if by animism we understand not that everything in the world has human-like characteristics, but that human beings have the ability to better represent the world, for example, through role play, then radical perspectivism is as "animistic" as is our ability as humans to role-play, imagine, empathize, or hypothesize. In other words, although we are able to role play the world from different non-human perspectives, as some people do in rituals, actors in their dramas, or children in their plays, it doesn't mean that along with such perspectives other animate or inanimate parts of the world also have our ability to think, write, or hypothesize. If people in certain cultures have been playing world in their rituals, it may be not because they failed to understand it, but because we failed to understand the world. If they were unable to explain what they have been doing in a way that we can understand, for example, by articulating a theory similar to radical perspectivism, it doesn't mean that they can't teach us something about how to live in the world, or, for that matter, how to understand it. In fact, even our use of the term "animism" may reflect more the projection of our beliefs on nature, than the "naturalizing" of our beliefs: we invented a term, "animism," to protect our view of the world from foreign world views, which we redefine in order to justify our own.

B. The Problem of Human-Like Intentions

It may be objected that we have described the world as something that can assume, or have a perspective or a view, and therefore as something that has human-like intentions (such as, the intention to assume this rather than that view or perspective). This is so because we said that the world may have perspectives or "first assumptions" other than our own. In response to this objection, it may be said that, first, whether the world has "intentions" depends on how one defines the term "intention." If by intention is meant the inclination to do something, then there is little doubt that there are numerous non-human elements in the world that intend all the time: if left without its brakes on,

my car has the "intention" to run down the hill. If left unperturbed, the moon has the "intention" of revolving around the earth. If allowed to choose freely, my cat has the "intention" of chasing after a string-toy. If, on the other hand, intention is defined in strictly human terms as the type of "intention" which only humans have, then it makes no sense that it should ever apply to any-one or any-thing other than human beings: it is only human-like intention "by definition." Consequently, it makes no sense to speak of my car as having "intentions." Likewise with our description of the world. If we pre-define non-human world parts as completely different from humans, then no non-human world-part can be human-like. In such a dichotomous world, it becomes almost impossible for humans to open a horizontal dialogue with the world, where the world can communicate freely with humans with "words" that humans can understand. If we re-define or expand the meaning of the term "intention" to include its possibly being held by non-humans, then it no longer sounds strange to speak of another world-part as having intentions. For example, a shark may assume that I am edible, and therefore intend to eat me. Although the shark's atomic first assumption may be less "sophisticated" than mine, in the sense that he has less the capacity to imagine, interrelate, analyze, or pretend than I can as a human being, it has no less the capacity to assume certain things about me, as I have about the shark when I go fishing (perhaps even fishing for sharks). Perhaps it is for this reason that certain writers allow nature in their work to be itself apart from what assumptions human beings may commonly make about nature at the time. For example, in Heminway's The Old Man and the Sea[15] the fisherman develops an almost perspectivistic understanding of his prey, while the hunted whale is seen as no less understanding of the fisherman's intentions. These writers allow their human and non-human characters to assume radically non-atomic perspectives.

Intentions by Inanimate World-Parts

A related objection may be that although animate parts of the world, such as, other animals, may have the capacity to assume, how can we show that so do inanimate parts of the world, such as, trees, mountains, rivers, or even such plain things as stones, or human artifacts (table, painting, bicycle)? Again, whether they do depends on our definition of the term "assumption." By pre-defining "assumption" to include only animals, we have excluded even thinking about "assumptions" held by inanimate "objects." This is so because by so pre-defining "assumption" to include only animate beings we engage in re-establishing in-fact how our definition has predictably predefined the "facts" to be like. For example, we may exclude from our thinking even thinking about the possibility of any-thing non-animate being capable of having any assumptions, let alone an assumption about us or the world, and therefore don't even try to find them. It is in this sense that much of the modern discussion of science, meaning, or language, may be no more than the linguistic evolution of a pre-determined epistemological agenda: terms are pre-defined, or assumed to have been defined a certain way, and therefore "found," predictably enough, to apply only to human-centered assumptions. If we expand our definition of "assumption" to include assumptions held by non-animate parts of the world, such as, rivers, trees, or mountains, then it doesn't sound strange that a river should "assume" whatever we may be able to imagine in our role-play a river might be capable of assuming. Witness the role that rivers play in epic, religious, or allegorical stories, where they are fully capable of "assuming" (as was the river Xanthos in Homer's Iliad). Witness, also, how people in certain cultures role-play in their rituals

different inanimate parts of nature: they are capable of imagining how a river might reinterpret the world. Thus to take the river's perspective, while a human being might assume that a river may be used to water his crops, build a dam, or travel with a boat, the river may possibly see him as a user of its water, builder of dams that stop its flow, or maker of boats with which to navigate it. It is in this sense that cultures that role-play the world may know more about the world, since they are willing to reinterpret it also from a variety of non-human perspectives, than we do in the west even in spite of our usually more advanced technical or scientific knowledge[16].

Moral Education

A world where no-one world is for sure, as is the world of our world, is a world beyond conventional morality. By having their minds subjected to a variety of first assumptions in their re-intertepretations of the world, some students may find that the morality inside which they have safely managed to survive may not be the only one possible. This doesn't necessarily mean that theirs is any better or worse than other views of morality, but only that other people's might be at least as good an alternative as theirs, and therefore neither better nor worse. If introduced suddenly, a radically perspectivist morality may cause some students so much insecurity, as to reject reinterpretation in favor of a less "reinterpretable" morality where nothing is uncertain[17].

It may be argued that there can't possibly be a morality other than that which humans designed. In fact, the very idea of something being moral is a human-made idea, and therefore impossible for non-human parts of the world to have a "morality." If morality is defined in strictly human terms, then the world is clearly a-moral: What is "moral" from the perspective of humans, is <u>not</u> from the perspective of the world. It is in this sense, to paraphrase Nietzsche, that our world is beyond good or evil[18]. The problem with the use of the term "morality" in human affairs is that it is so inextricably tied to only human-made moral rules that it doesn't seem to make sense to speak of a morality other than that which humans designed. It is in that sense that a human-made morality may be no less self-serving, and no more universal, than is man's myopic understanding of the world. By expanding their conception of morality to include the perspectives of other world-parts, students transcend their culture-bound, time-bound, or human-bound first assumptions regarding morality. They can do this by role-playing the world's moral possibilities as the world itself might have interpreted them: their morality becomes cosmic.

It may be argued that certain human-made moral rules are moral even in spite of the fact that humans made them: they are inherently generalizable, and therefore applicable to every part in the world. The problem with such a view is, again, that it is based on certain human-bound first assumptions regarding "generalization" which other parts of the world may not share. The only possible exception to this might be the idea of morality as reciprocity, or what is known as the "golden rule." This is so because underlying the golden rule of reciprocity is a mathematics of equal returns that may be applied to any world part irrespective of time or place. It is in this sense that if there is a morality that the universe obeys, it is a mathematical one of harmony among all of its parts. To paraphrase several philosophers and mathematicians ever since

Pythagoras first postulated the idea, the mathematics of the universe is a type of non-human-bound morality that humans can understand.

Endnotes

1. The paper is based on a book-in-progress written by the author during 1991-1992, Humans in the World: An Introduction to Radical Perspectivism.

2. Some of the more recent Marxist critiques in education include Herbert Bowles and Samuel Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America. New York: Basic Books, 1976; and Michael Apple, Education and Power. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.Critical theorists include Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society. Boston: Beacon, 1964; and Jurgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests. London: Heinemann, 1972. Hermeneuticists include Hans Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method. Tr. and ed. G. Barden and J. Cumming. New York: Seabury Press, 1975; and Paul Ricoeur in Ricoeur: Paul A. Ricoeur Reader. Reflection and Imagination. Ed. M. J. Valdes. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

3. The history of radical perspectvism is briefly examined in the chapter on "History of Perspectivist Ideas," Humans in the World.

4. See the chapter on "Husserl and Phenomenology" in Humans in the World.

5. Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. Tr. with an intro. D. Carr. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970; Phenomenological Psychology: Lectures, Summer Semester, 1925. Tr. J. Scanlon. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977.

6. Gadamer, Truth and Method; and Ricoeur, Ricoeur Reader. Derrida's ideas may be found in Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida. Ed J. Sallis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

7. For a more detailed discussion of objections against radical perspectivist theory, see the chapter on "Objections" in Humans in the World.

8. See chapter on "Responsibility" in Humans and the World.

9. See chapter on "First Assumptions" in Humans in the World.

10. See chapters on "Morality" and "Ethics" in Humans in the World.

11. See section on moral education, below.

12. The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery? Ed. Henry Giroux and David Purpel. Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan, 1983. Robert Dreeben, On What Is Learned in School. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1985.

13. Edward C. Stewart, American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Pittsburgh, Penn.: Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, 1971.

14. Some of the objections raised in Humans in the World include the problem regarding the existence of a deceptive God, first assumptions in young children, dogmaticity, the problem of biased observations, first assumptions in role play, selection of universal first assumptions, universilization, and the problem of unknown world-categories. See chapter on "Objections."

15. Ernest Heminway, The Old Man and the Sea. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

16. See chapter on "Culture" in Humans in the World.

17. See the chapter on "Psychology" in Humans in the World.

18. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future. New York: Macmillan, 1907.